

TORREYA

Vol. 26

No. 4

July-August, 1926

FROM RIO TO PETROPOLIS

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Petropolis is a summer resort in the Organ Mountains about thirty-five miles north of Rio. Leaving the hotel a little before seven on a trolley car, I changed to a taxi at the foot of the mountain and caught the 8:30 train at Praia Formosa for Petropolis. As I passed through the gate with my first-class ticket, the guard handed me a slip of paper with M 3 on it, which meant that seat three in car M was reserved for me and that I should take no other. This prevented a rush for seats, giving preference to those arriving first at the station, and indicating when the train was full.

For the first half-hour, our journey lay through low ground partly covered with mangrove (*Avicenna*) and various other marsh plants, and then we reached a low terrace, slightly above sea-level, on which bamboo, palms, bracken, and a number of young trees of second growth appeared; the most conspicuous being a purple-flowered *Tibouchina* and a low, spreading acacia with beautiful white flowers. I had seen this acacia before, but never in such great abundance, and the purple and white together made a very pleasing color scheme.

At Rozario, forty-five minutes from Rio, the blue mountains ahead looked quite near and the vegetation became denser and more varied, resembling that on top of the mountain near São Paulo. The same terrace continued unbroken, but there were now older trees covered with moisture-loving cacti, air-plants, aroids, and other vines. The villages were not attractive, gardens were practically wanting, and the people seemed poor. Passing Estrella and Entroncamento, we entered a small valley between foothills covered with forests like those on Corcovado, in which the same white-leaved tree mingled with gold and purple-flowered trees on the steep granite slopes, while the white-flowered acacia grew in the valley.

At Raiz da Serra the ascent of the mountain began, the train being divided into sections with an engine behind each, and the wheels running on cogs up a heavy grade. Here at the base of the mountain, over an hour's ride from Rio, is the first place one would care to stop, and it would be a good place to collect plants that grow near sea-level. The ginger lily, or garland flower, appeared here and grew along the track all the way to the summit as it did between Santos and São Paulo, while the ferns and small plants on the banks were like those on the sides of Corcovado.

Slowly up the mountain we climbed, the view becoming finer and the scenery wilder as we ascended. Very few houses appeared—only rocky slopes covered with an unbroken forest. At Meio da Serra, where there is a factory, the collecting might be good, but the train did not stop coming up. Near the summit much of the forest has been cleared, and there are scattered houses marking the beginning of Alto da Serra, which really connects with the town of Petropolis two miles further on.

At Alto da Serra, 3000 feet above sea-level, I left the train and went into the woods collecting, finding a number of very interesting things; but, after a couple of hours, my meager early breakfast began to fail me and I took a trolley car down to Petropolis to hunt up a restaurant. The natural attractions of this far-famed place are many, being surrounded by forest-covered mountains at an elevation that insures a delightful climate. There is also a dashing, clear mountain stream passing through the town, shaded with splendid trees and ornamented along both banks with Japanese lily-of-the-valley and thousands of blue hydrangeas.

I have driven around the town and seen its parks and gardens, its hotel and charming villas, and the well-dressed people leading an easy life; but my mind turns again to a comfortable ch[^]alet forty miles away, perched up on the side of Corcovado, and my watch tells me that the train will leave in a few minutes. Soon I will see again the wonderful panorama stretching from the summit of the Organ Mountains to the harbor of Rio, and, if I had the time, I would walk the entire distance from the top of the mountain to its base along the highway through the forest, and botanize to my heart's content.